

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MetLife Foundation and NASSP
Announce the 2014 Breakthrough Schools**

Nine schools honored for high academic achievement despite challenges from student poverty
Reston, VA—MetLife Foundation and NASSP are proud to announce and celebrate this year's nine Breakthrough Schools for their strong academic success in the face of challenges that result from high student poverty rates.

The schools will be officially recognized at NASSP's Ignite 2014 Conference in Dallas, TX, February 6-8.

Since 2007, the MetLife Foundation-NASSP Breakthrough Schools program showcases middle level and high schools that are high achieving or have dramatically improved student achievement while serving large numbers of students who live in poverty.

"NASSP applauds these schools for understanding the need to prioritize personalization in the classroom and working to meet the specific needs of each and every student," said NASSP Executive Director JoAnn Bartoletti. "The principals of these schools show us all that high poverty doesn't have to mean low achievement, but that with the right leadership, sufficient time and a clear focus, urban, rural and suburban high-poverty schools can make great strides in academic achievement and overall school success."

The 2014 MetLife Foundation-NASSP Breakthrough Schools are:

- Alice Ott Middle School, Portland, OR, James Johnston, principal
- Hastings Middle School, Hastings, NE, David Essink, principal
- John Marshall Fundamental Secondary School, Pasadena, CA, Mark Anderson, principal
- Troy Howard Middle School, Belfast, ME, Kimberly Buckheit, principal
- Garner Magnet High School, Garner, NC, Drew Cook, principal
- Maplewood Richmond Heights High School, St. Louis, MO, Kevin Grawer, principal
- Oberlin High School, Oberlin, OH, William Baylis II, principal
- Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, NY, Carol Conklin-Spillane, principal
- William Smith High School, Aurora, CO, David Roll, principal

Selection criteria for the award are based on a school's documented success in implementing strategies that are aligned with the three core areas of NASSP's Breaking Ranks Framework, including collaborative leadership, personalization, and curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

These Breakthrough Schools have shown continuous growth on state assessments during at least the last three years and made progress toward reducing the achievement gap. Success in implementing the strategies is documented and verified through school site visits, including meetings with principals, teachers, students and community leaders.

The Breakthrough Schools will each receive a \$5,000 grant and their principals will have the opportunity to participate in Ignite '14 and other events throughout the year to share their experiences and successes with other school leaders around the nation.

For more information on the Breakthrough Schools program and this year's winners, visit www.nassp.org/breakthrough.

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About NASSP

NASSP is the leading organization of and national voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and all school leaders from across the United States and more than 45 countries around the world. The association provides research-based professional development and resources, networking, and advocacy to build the capacity of middle level and high school leaders to continually improve student performance. Reflecting its longstanding commitment to student leadership development as well, NASSP administers the **National Honor Society**, **National Junior Honor Society**, **National Elementary Honor Society**, and **National Association of Student Councils**.

About MetLife Foundation

MetLife Foundation is committed to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide, through a focus on empowering older adults, preparing young people and building livable communities. In

education, it seeks to strengthen public schools through effective teaching and collaborative leadership, and to prepare students for access to and success in higher education, particularly during the crucial first year. The Foundation's grantmaking is informed by findings from the annual MetLife Survey of the American Teacher. More information is available at www.metlife.org.